

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, and 9-13 are amended. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4 and 9-13 are pending and under consideration. Reconsideration is requested.

Claim Amendments

Claim 1 is amended to recite a process apparatus including "a storage unit storing information about a discussion at an electronic conference, the information including respective utterance objects of respective speakers in the discussion, each of the utterance objects including data, and a procedure for the data, and reply link information to another utterance object." Claims 9-13 are similarly amended.

Support for the amendment is found, for example, on page 2, lines 22-24 and page 3, lines 1-10 of the specification. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Page 3: Rejection of claims 1-4 and 9-13 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph

On page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-4 and 9-13 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Examiner asserts that

claims 1, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 were amended to include the limitation "each of the utterance objects including data and a procedure." There is no support for this limitation in the specification as filed. On page 2 of the specification, the Applicant discloses, "An object usually has data and a procedure (method) for the data and can also have link information with other objects." However, the Applicant does not indicate that an utterance object has data and a procedure. Furthermore, there is evidence in the specification that the Applicant distinguishes between an object and an utterance object. For instance, the last paragraph of Page 2 states, "An object of utterance is managed by an object ID..." Here, the Applicant has clearly distinguished between an object and a utterance object.

(Action at page 3, lines 1-20).

Applicants respectfully submit that the recited feature "each of the utterance objects including data and a procedure" is supported. As an example, the specification discloses:

In Fig. 3, utterance objects 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 correspond to the nodes of the tree, and indicate the objects of utterances A, B, C, D and E, respectively. In this case, utterance A corresponds to an agenda, utterances B, D and E correspond to replies to utterance A, and utterance C corresponds to a reply to utterance B. . . . the number of utterances, the depth of the tree of discussion, etc., as indexes, based on these utterance objects, and if an index exceeds prescribed

values, the program 13 determines to hold a face-to-face conference . . . The utterance object 21 shown in Fig. 3, for example, internally stores information as shown in Fig. 4. The object ID 31 is the identification information of the utterance object 21. A root object 32 corresponds to the root link, and is the ID of utterance object corresponding to the root of the tree of discussion to which the utterance object 21 belongs. In this case, since the utterance object 21 corresponds to the root, the root object 32 matches the object ID 31.

(Emphasis added, see, for example, Fig. 3 and page 9, line 5 - page 10, line 8 of the specification).

That is, as disclosed in the specification, "an utterance object" refers to an "an object of utterance." Thus, as understood by one of ordinary skill in the art, "an utterance" object including data and a procedure is supported by the specification in the disclosure,

Applicants submit that claims 1-4 and 8-13 comply with 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph and request withdrawal of the rejection.

Pages 4-6: Rejection of claims 1, 2 and 9 -13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schoof, II (US 5440624) in view of Towell (U.S.P. 6,052,680) and Roberts (U.S.P. 6,601,055).

Pages 6-7: Rejection of claims 3-4 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schoof, Towell, and Roberts in view of Garbeck et al. (U.S.P. 5,237,499)

On pages 4-6 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects independent claims 1 and 9-13 (and dependent claim 2) as being unpatentable over Schoof in view of Towell and Roberts. On pages 6-7 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects dependent claims 3-4 as being unpatentable over combinations of Schoof, Towell, Roberts, and Garbeck.

The rejections are traversed. Applicants submit that features recited by each of the independent claims are not taught by even an *arguendo* combination of the art relied on by the Examiner. Independent claim 1, for example, recites a process apparatus including

a) "a storage unit storing information about a discussion at an electronic conference, the information including respective utterance objects of respective speakers in the discussion, each of the utterance objects including data, and a procedure for the data, and reply link information to another utterance object (emphasis added);" and

b) "a judgment unit calculating one of a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of utterance objects in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion as an index of an amount of the information stored about the discussion, and said judgment unit deciding to hold a face-to-face conference if the index exceeds a specific value."

Independent claims 9-13 have similar recitations.

The Action concedes that:

Schoof does not specifically teach a judgment unit calculating one of a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of utterance objects in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion as an index of an amount of the information stored about the discussion and said judgment unit deciding to hold a face-to-face conference if the index exceeds a specific value.

(Action at page 4, lines 9-13).

The Examiner relies on Towell as teaching

to modify Schoof with the teachings of Towell and include a rule based system to schedule a meeting when certain criteria is met with the motivation to provide the user with a simple method of scheduling a meeting when appropriate.

(Action at page 5, lines 10-12).

The Action concedes that even the combination of Schoof and Towell do not specifically teach "that words are utterance objects, which include data and a procedure." The Examiner asserts that Roberts teaches:

words can be utterance objects which include data and a procedure (i.e. "the invention comprising the steps of waiting for an utterance from a user; constructing an input object from the utterance, the input object identifying a modality, a sequence, and a content of the utterance; inserting the input object into an input stream; sending the input stream to a knowledge representation module; and parsing and encoding the input object in the knowledge representation module into an abstract statement." Column 4, Lines 60-67). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Schoof and Towell with the teachings of Roberts and include utterance objects with the motivation to facilitate the application design and provide for easier encapsulation, modularity and code reuse.

(Action at page 5, line 13 - page 6, line 2).

Applicants submit that the Examiner's interpretation of Roberts is in error, and Roberts does not teach "utterance objects which include data and a procedure." By contrast, Roberts merely teaches:

the invention comprising the steps of waiting for an utterance from a user; constructing an input object from the utterance, the input object identifying a modality, a sequence, and a content of the utterance; inserting the input object into an input stream; sending the input stream to a knowledge representation module; and parsing and encoding the input object in the knowledge representation module into an abstract statement.

(see, for example, col. 4, lines 60-67).

Further Roberts merely teaches:

objects from a range of modalities including natural language, text, mouse gestures, and graphical presentation objects. It receives a stream of multimodal

input objects from the input module 12, and parses and encodes these objects into representations of the user's actions.

(see, for example, col. 35, lines 24- 28).

That is, Roberts teaches that "object" as taught by Roberts is merely an "utterance" and includes "natural language, text, mouse gestures, and graphical presentation objects." That is, Roberts teaches that an object includes data, but does not include a "procedure for the data" nor "reply link information to another utterance object," as recited by claim 1 for example.

Applicants submit that the *arguendo* combination of the art relied on by the Examiner does not support a determination of obviousness since the findings of fact concerning the teaching of Roberts indicate that Roberts, and thus the combination of art, does not teach an object including a "procedure for the data" nor a "reply link information to another utterance object".

The Examiner relies on Garback as teaching a reservation unit. Applicants submit that Garback does not teach a teach an object including a "procedure for the data" nor a "reply link information to another utterance object".

As set forth in USPTO Examination Guidelines for Determining Obviousness Under 35 U.S.C. 103 in View of the KSR of October 3, 2007 ("USPTO Guidelines"):

while the ultimate determination of obviousness is a legal conclusion, the underlying Graham inquiries are factual. When making an obviousness rejection, Office personnel must therefore ensure that the written record includes findings of fact concerning the state of the art and the teachings of the references applied.

(Emphasis added, see page 57527, middle column).

Further, Applicants submit that such a traversal meets the requirements as set forth by the Section V. Consideration of Applicant's Rebuttal Evidence set forth in the USPTO Guidelines.

Summary

Since features recited by each of the independent claims 1 and 9-13 (and therefore dependent claims 2-4) are not taught a combination of the art relied on by the Examiner, the rejection should be withdrawn, and claims 1-4 and 9-13 allowed.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

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By: Paul W. Bobowiec
Paul W. Bobowiec
Registration No. 47,431

1201 New York Avenue, N.W., 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501